



Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division

2008 PHEASANT AND QUAIL COOPERATORS EARLY SEASON REPORT

Early season reports from pheasant cooperators allow biologists to quickly assess hunter success and local field conditions across Michigan's Lower Peninsula (Zones 2 and 3) at the beginning of the pheasant season. This report summarizes their responses for October 20-23, 2008.

Cooperators returned 41 surveys and hunted 241 hours in 22 counties during the survey period. Fewer cooperators returned early season reports in 2008 than in 2007 (57). Hunters flushed an average of 0.7 roosters per hour statewide (Table 1). This is similar to the average flush rate of 0.6 roosters per hour statewide in 2007. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest rooster flush rates were Tuscola, Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Huron.

Most respondents (49%) thought pheasant populations were down from last year in the areas they hunted. About 20% thought that numbers were up or slightly up from last year (Table 3).

Hunters commented that the weather was rainy during the season opener. Many noted that the weather and standing crops may have contributed to low success. Comments ranged from "light hunting pressure" to "heavy hunting pressure." Comments on pheasant numbers ranged from "more birds" to "no birds." These comments are similar to those in recent years, indicating pheasant numbers and habitat are unevenly distributed in Michigan.

Acknowledgments: We thank all of the hunter cooperators who provided their early season hunting data. Survey data entered by Alice Simpson. Report compiled by Valerie Frawley and Al Stewart. Report reviewed by Cheryl Nelson. This project was supported by the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act under Pittman-Robertson Project W-147-R-5.

Table 1. Rooster and hen flush rates by zone and year for October 20-23.

Zone	2007			2008		
	Hours	Roosters/ hour	Hens/hour	Hours	Roosters/ hour	Hens/hour
2	2.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	358.6	0.6	0.9	240.6	0.7	0.8
Statewide	360.6	0.6	0.9	240.6	0.7	0.8

Table 2. Hunter opinions about pheasant populations.

Trend	2007	2008
Up	13%	15%
Slightly up	6%	5%
Same	31%	20%
Slightly down	21%	12%
Down	29%	49%

